

WHAT IS CLAIMED:

1. A method for an interactive unified messaging device, said method comprising:

receiving, by an interactive unified messaging device, a call from a caller, wherein the caller is identified by caller ID information;

retrieving a configuration of said caller based at least in part on said caller ID information; and

responding to the call based at least in part on said configuration of said caller.

2. The method of claim 1, further comprising responding to the call based at least in part on a default configuration if a configuration of said caller is not retrievable.

3. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

setting up an entity configuration associated with an entity and with caller ID information related to the entity; and

storing said entity configuration in a location accessible to said interactive unified messaging device, wherein said entity configuration is retrievable based at least in part on said caller ID information related to the entity.

4. The method of claim 3, wherein said setting up an entity configuration includes at least one of:

specifying a ringing pattern;

recording a customized greeting;

defining forwarding behavior;

customizing response behavior based at least in part on one of scheduling information and caller priority;

setting a schedule for automatic callback; and

configuring an event reminder.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein said ringing pattern includes one of a number of rings and a type of ringing sound, and wherein said customized greeting corresponds to one of a predetermined time of a day, time of a week, day of a month, and day of a year.

6. The method of claim 4, wherein said defining forwarding behavior comprises defining a forwarding option and a forwarding address.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein said forwarding option includes one of telephone, e-mail, and pager, and said forwarding address includes one of a telephone number, an e-mail address, and a pager number.

8. The method of claim 4, wherein said scheduling information is associated with a time of return from an activity by a user of said interactive unified messaging device.

9. The method of claim 4, further comprising specifying, by said caller, availability of said caller to receive a return call, and placing, by said interactive unified messaging device, said return call based at least in part on said availability of said caller.

10. The method of claim 4, wherein said caller priority is based at least in part on one of access control information associated with said caller and priority information associated with said caller ID information.

11. The method of claim 4, wherein said configuring an event reminder comprises:

specifying event information;

choosing a mechanism by which said event reminder is to be executed; and

determining a manner in which said event reminder is to be executed.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein said event information includes a time of said event and a nature of said event.

13. The method of claim 11, wherein said mechanism includes one of telephone, e-mail, or Braille.

14. The method of claim 11, wherein said manner includes a time when said event reminder is to be executed.

15. The method of claim 11, further comprising executing said event reminder by said mechanism in said manner.

16. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
retrieving a status of said interactive unified messaging device; and
reporting said status on a medium.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein said status includes one of a message of a caller and statistics related to a caller.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein said statistics include one of number of calls, duration of calls, and preferred callback time.

19. The method of claim 16, wherein said reporting said status includes at least one of playing back a voice message, displaying said status on a display screen, annunciating said status via a text-to-speech engine; and transmitting said status via a Braille mechanism, a personal computer, or the Internet.

20. The method of claim 1, further comprising storing a configuration for a user of said interactive unified messaging device, wherein an option associated with said configuration of said user is unavailable to said caller.

21. An interactive unified messaging device comprising:
a receiver configured to receive a call from a caller, wherein said caller is identified by caller ID information;

a configuration retrieval mechanism arranged to retrieve a configuration of said caller; and

a response agent configured to respond to the call based at least in part on said configuration of said caller.

22. The messaging device of claim 21, further comprising:

a configurator arranged to allow a configuration to be prepared based at least in part on caller ID information; and

a configuration storage mechanism arranged to store said prepared configuration based at least in part on said caller ID information, wherein said prepared configuration is retrievable based at least in part on said caller ID information.

23. The messaging device of claim 21, wherein said response agent is configured to respond to the call based at least in part on a default configuration if a configuration of said caller is not retrievable by said configuration retrieval mechanism.

24. A system for an interactive unified messaging device comprising:

an interactive unified messaging device configured to receive a call from a caller, wherein said caller is identified by caller ID information, to retrieve a configuration of said caller, and to respond to the call based at least in part on said configuration;

a telephone connected to said interactive unified messaging device, said telephone being configured to convey information between a user and said interactive unified messaging device; and

a network access device connected to said interactive unified messaging device, said network access device being configured to access one or more computers connected to a network.

25. The system of claim 24, wherein said network includes the Internet.

26. The system of claim 24, further comprising a personal access device configured to communicate with said interactive messaging device, wherein said user issues commands to said interactive messaging device via said personal access device.

27. A computer-readable medium encoded with a plurality of processor-executable instructions for:

receiving, by an interactive unified messaging device, a call from a caller, wherein the caller is identified by caller ID information;

retrieving a configuration of said caller based at least in part on said caller ID information; and

responding to the call based at least in part on said configuration of said caller.

28. The computer-readable medium of claim 27, further comprising processor-executable instructions for:

setting up an entity configuration associated with an entity and with caller ID information related to the entity; and

storing said entity configuration in a location accessible to said interactive unified messaging device, wherein said entity configuration is retrievable based at least in part on said caller ID information related to the entity.

29. The computer-readable medium of claim 27, further comprising processor-executable instructions for:

retrieving a status of said interactive unified messaging device; and

reporting said status on a medium.